

READING FIRST IN TENNESSEE

Q & A's

[What is Scientifically Based Reading Research?](#)

[What are the five essential components of effective reading instruction?](#)

[Does every Reading First school have a full-time Literacy Leader?](#)

[How do Reading First in Tennessee schools address reading intervention?](#)

[What is the Three-Tier Reading Model?](#)

[How do Reading First in Tennessee schools use assessment to drive instruction?](#)

[Why is professional development so important to Reading First in Tennessee?](#)

[What if my school does not receive Reading First funding?](#)

What is Scientifically Based Reading Research?

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Reading First uses scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) to implement a clear and specific plan to accelerate/monitor the progress of students reading below grade level. Research-based strategies are proved to enable students to reach grade level or reading proficiency. In an SBRR classroom, a teacher uses scientific research to inform reading instruction. A Reading First teacher implements systematic change based on research, not on ideology and philosophy. This involves providing intensive, explicit research-based reading instruction to all children, including English language learners and students with special needs.

SBRR:

- Applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties
- Employs systematic empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- Meets rigorous standards where methods and conclusions must be confirmed by peer review
- Prevents the use of unreliable and untested methods that can actually impede academic progress
- Makes teaching more effective, productive, and efficient

For more information about Scientifically Based Reading Research, please refer to:

[*Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks of Reading Instruction and A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction*](#)

What are the five essential components of effective reading instruction?

For more information about the five essential components of reading instruction, please visit the website for the National Reading Panel Report at

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.cfm>

The National Reading Panel Report has determined through the use of research that effective reading instruction addresses five critical areas.

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension

Here is a summary of the [five essential components](#). These five areas were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act and the Reading First initiative as essential components of effective reading instruction.

There are many approaches to teaching these five essential components of effective reading instruction. The most reliable and effective approach is called systematic and explicit instruction.

Systematic instruction reflects the following:

- Skills and concepts are taught in a planned, logically progressive sequence;
- Lessons focus on clearly defined objectives that are stated in terms of what students will do;
- Multiple practice activities are scheduled purposefully to help students master and retain new skills;
- Students work on carefully designed tasks that give them opportunities to apply what they have been taught;
- Assessments are designed and used in a timely fashion to monitor skill acquisition as well as students' ability to apply new skills, to retain them over time, and to use them independently.

With explicit instruction:

- The teacher states clearly what is being taught and models effectively how it is used by a skilled reader;
- Explicit instruction ensures students' attention is drawn to important features of an example or demonstration.

For more information about the five essential components of effective reading instruction, refer to:

[*Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks of Reading Instruction*](#) and [*A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction*](#)

Does every Reading First school have a full-time Literacy Leader?

Yes. The Literacy Leader (sometimes referred to as a Reading Coach) is key in coordinating the school's reading program. Having a Literacy Leader provides supportive and shared leadership, collective learning and application, shared values and vision, and shared personal practice. The Reading First Literacy Leader works with teachers, school administration, district administration, and other Reading First Literacy Leaders.

Here are the responsibilities of the Reading First Literacy Leader, as outlined in the Reading First in Tennessee grant: [Literacy Leader Description](#)

How do Reading First in Tennessee schools address reading intervention?

For more information about intervention in Reading First in Tennessee schools, please see our [Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide](#)

Reading First schools in Tennessee use a system of reading intervention that is based on the [Three-Tier Reading Model](#). The literacy team is a key support for the Three-Tier Reading Model. This team implements, oversees and monitors the school's reading program/curricula. It provides data-based organizational direction for literacy instruction and decision-making.

In addition, the Literacy Team analyzes school-wide assessment data to determine school trends and grade level needs. The data is used to formulate long-term and intermediate goals and objectives.

What is the Three-Tier Reading Model?

For more information about the Three-Tier Reading Model, visit the website for the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at <http://www.texasreading.org/3tier/>

Also, please refer to the [Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide](#), Section 2

- The Three-Tier Reading Model is designed to meet the reading needs of all students in the classroom.
- It is a prevention model that aids in the identification of at-risk and struggling readers and provides support throughout the early years of schooling.
- This framework aids in delivering assessment-driven, differentiated reading instruction for all students.
- It focuses on reading instruction that uses scientific research-based core, supplemental, and intervention reading programs/curricula.
- The Three-Tier Reading Model is an effective way to implement Response to Intervention (RTI)

The Three Tiers:

Tier I - core classroom reading instruction that all students receive with assessment of student benchmarks three times per year and ongoing professional development for teachers

Tier II - intervention and additional reading instruction with frequent progress monitoring) for struggling readers

Tier III - more intensive intervention and frequent progress monitoring for students with reading difficulties who are not making adequate progress in Tiers I and II

How do Reading First in Tennessee schools use assessment to drive instruction?

Coming Soon!!! [Tennessee Reading First Assessment Guide](#)

Assessment is the driving force behind instruction and student learning. When professionals analyze each child's performance and make appropriate decisions, pedagogy is transformed into a true data-driven process.

There are four types of assessment:

1. Screening – Reading First in Tennessee schools perform benchmarking assessment three times a year for all students.
2. Progress Monitoring – Monitoring or assessment of students is frequent and timely, and should also measure a small number of specific skills. Results from progress monitoring help teachers determine the success of current instruction and intervention allow for instructional adjustments.
3. Diagnostic - Teachers may need to refer students for diagnostic testing if other concerns arise during instruction and intervention.
4. Outcome - The analysis of reading assessment instruments helps schools to:
 - Identify the reading components measured by each instrument,
 - Determine the most appropriate use of each assessment, and
 - Select reading assessment instruments that will best match student needs.

For more information about assessment in Reading First in Tennessee schools, please refer to our [Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide](#), Section 3

Why is professional development so important to Reading First in Tennessee?

The single most important factor in learning is an effective teacher. There is significant evidence that professional development in reading can have positive effects on improving practice and increasing student achievement. Effective professional development requires extensive time for initial training that includes discussions of research on how children learn to read. It also includes discussion of specific instructional strategies. In addition, it requires extensive in-class follow-up.

Some of the goals of good professional development are the following:

- Improve student achievement
- Implement research-based and comprehensive balanced reading programs
- Cultivate teachers and administrators to become more effective

For more information about professional development in Reading First in Tennessee schools, please refer to our [Tennessee Reading First Intervention Guide](#), Section 5

Professional development also encourages a professional learning community. A professional learning community is one in which the teachers, administrators, and other professionals continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit.

A professional learning community allows for the following:

- Collective learning and application

- Shared values and vision
- Supportive conditions
- Shared personal practice
- Reduction of isolation
- Increased commitment to the mission and goals
- Powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice
- More satisfaction and higher morale

What if my school does not receive Reading First funding?

Reading First is the literacy cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Even if you don't have Reading First funding, you and your schools can still benefit from the practices and principles we have implemented in Reading First schools. Improving reading instruction and teacher practices were initially goals for Reading First schools. Now the effort has moved into the next phase which is to take Reading First practices and principles into non-Reading First schools across the state of Tennessee.

We can help you design effective professional development to improve teacher practice and review reading principles with you that have proven to be successful in Reading First schools. For further information, contact [Jim Herman](#) by e-mail or call Jim at (615) 741-3387 and he will be glad to answer any of your questions or concerns.